CONAN DOYLE AT HOME.

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Dr. A. Conan Doyle, who arrived in this country a week ago, has come ostensibly to deliver a series of lectures, but the real object of his visit is to travel through the United States. If the well known novelist is curious to see America, he may rest assured that the public here is equally eager to make his acquaintance.

Of that brilliant group of vigorous Scotchmen who are just now delighting the literary world, no single one possesses a more interesting personality than Dr. Doyle. Although but 33 years of age, his historical romances and thrilling detective stories have earned him a phenomenal reputation. To the average reader he is best known perhaps through the exploits of that wizard in unravelling criminal mysteries, Sherlock Holmes. And since the author has announced that Holmes is definitely dead, never more to be revived in fiction, a vivid interest centers about the creation of the very prince of detectives.

DOYLE'S INSPIRATION.

Dr. Doyle himself frankly acknowledges that his unique character was inspired by Dr. Joseph Bell, of Edinburgh, one of his professors at the Scotch university. While he could scarcely be called the original Sherlock Holmes, yet Dr. Bell's singular genius for noting details and from them forming a chain of circumstantial evidence, certainly gave Doyle the clue to his now famous hero. A theory which Dr. Bell constantly advanced was that any really good doctor ought to tell before a patient has fairly sat down just about what is the matter with him or her. With a woman especially this observant physician can often tell by noticing her, exactly what part of her body she is going to talk about. He persistently impressed upon his students—Conan Doyle among them—the vast importance of little distinctions, the endless significance of trifles.

Dr. Bell says: "The great majority of people, of incidents, and of cases resemble each other in the main and larger features. For instance, most men have apiece a head, two arms, a nose, a mouth, and a certain number of teeth. It is the little differences, in themselves trifles, such as the droop of an eyelid, or what not, which differentiate men."

The doctor illustrates his mode of procedure by giving one or two instances to prove the successful application of his theory, and both of them are strongly suggestive of Sherlock Holmes' methods. "Once," he said, "a man walked into the room where I was instructing the students, and his case seemed to be a very simple one. I was talkink about what was wrong with him. 'Of course, gentlemen,' I happened to say, 'he has been a soldier in a Highland regiment and probably a bandsman.' I pointed out the swagger in his walk suggestive of the piper; while his shortness told me if he had been a soldier, it was probably as a bandsman. In fact, he had the whole appearance of a man in one of the Highland regiments. The man turned out to be nothing but a shoemaker, and had never been in the army in his life. This was rather a floorer, but, being absolutely certain I was right, seeing something was up, I did a pretty cool thing. I told two of the strongest clerks in dressers to remove the man to a side room and detain him till I came. I next had him stripped, and under the left breast I instantly detected a little blue 'D' branded on his skin. He was a deserter. That was how they used to mark them in the Crimean days, and later, although it is not now permitted. Of course, the reason of his evasion was at once clear.

"Conan Doyle," the doctor continued, "was one of the best students I ever had. He was exceedingly interested always in anything connected with diagnosis, and was never tired of trying to discover all those little details one looks for. I recollect he was much amused once when a patient walked in and sat down. 'Good morning, Pat,' I said, for it was impossible not to see that he was an Irishman. 'Good morning, your honor,' replied the patient. 'Did you have your walk over the links today as you came in from the south side of the town?' I asked. 'Yes,' said Pat. 'Did your honor see me?' Well, Conan Doyle could not see how I knew that, assuredly simple as it was. On a showery day, such as that had been, the reddish clay at bare parts of the links adheres to the boot, and a tiny part is bound to remain. There is no such clay anywhere else around the town for miles. That and one or two similar instances excited Doyle's keenest interest, and set him experimenting himself, with very brilliant results, as you know."

CONAN DOYLE IN HIS STUDY.

In Conan Dole's study, which is workshop, smoking room, and snuggery all in one, there stands on the bookcase a bust of a man with a keen, shrewd face. At first glance one is apt to fancy it the portrait of some great British statesman, which is quite a mistake. It is a clever bit of imaginative work done by a young Birmingham sculptor, Wilkins by name. He cast it in plaster, and sent it to Dr. Doyle as his ideal of Sherlock Holmes. The lean, well-modeled head, close-shut lips, inscrutable eyes, and iron jaw make an admirable conception of the now famous detective.

And, by the way, it would be hard to find a more workmanlike room than this cosy study where "The Refugees," "The Slapping Sal," and many another brilliant bit of fiction was written. The work-bench proper stands in the corner—one of those flat-topped desks so prevalent in England. The English author does not seem to take kindly to the haughty roller-top American desk, covered with transparent varnish and twenty-three patents.

There is a bookcase, filled with solid historical volumes for the most part. The most remarkable feature of the room is a series of water-color drawings done by Conan Doyle's father. The Doyle family has always been a family of artists, and the celebrated cover of Punch is, as everybody knows, the work of Richard Doyle. The drawings by Mr. Doyle's father are most weird and imaginative, being in art something like Edgar Allan Poe's stories are in fiction.

There are harpoons on the wall, for Doyle has been a whale fisher in his time, and has the skull of a polar bear and the stuffed body of an Iceland falcon to show that his aim was accurate. There are but two other Iceland falcons in England. The novelist came nearer to the North Pole than New York is to Chicago.

HIS ARCTIC EXPERIENCES.

No part of this author's varied life was richer in experiences to him than the months he spent aboard a Peterhead whaler. He roughed it along with the sturdy Scotch crew, but his receptive artist's nature received a thousand sharp impressions of which his companions remained ignorant. No one has described the sightings and hunt of a whale so vividly as Dr. Doyle, who says:

"It is not that the present generation is less persistent and skillful than its predecessors, nor is it that the Greenland whale is in danger of becoming extinct; but the true reason appears to be that nature, while depriving this unwieldy mass of blubber of any weapons, has given it in compensation a highly intelligent brain. That the whale entirely understands the mechanism of his own capture is beyond dispute. To swim backward and forward beneath a floe, in the hope of cutting the rope against the sharp edge of the ice, is a common device of the creature after being struck. By degrees, however, it has realized the fact that there are limits to the powers of its adversaries, and that by keeping far in among the icefields it may shake off the most intrepid of pursuers. Gradually the creature has deserted the open sea and bored deeper and deeper among the ice barriers, until now, at last, it really appears to have reached inaccessible feeding grounds; and it is seldom, indeed, that the watcher in the crow's nest sees the plume of spray and the black tail in the air which set his heart a-thumping.

"But if a man have the good fortune to be present at a 'fall,' and, above all, if he be, as I have been, in the harpooning and the lancing boat, he has a taste of sport which it would be ill to match. To play a salmon is a royal game, but when your fish weighs more than a suburban villa, and is worth a clear two thousand pounds; when, too your line is a thumb's thickness of manila rope with fifty strands, every strand tested for thirty-six pounds, it dwarfs all other experiences. And the lancing, too, when the creature is spent, and your boat pulls in to give it the coup de grace with cold steel, that is also exciting! A hundred tons of despair are churning the waters up into a red foam; two great black fins are rising and falling like the sails of a windmill, casting the boat into a shadow as they droop over it, but still the harpooner clings to the head, where no harm can come, and, with the wooden butt of a twelve-foot lance against his stomach, he presses it home until the long struggle is finished, and the black back rolls over to expose the livid, whitish surface beneath. Yet amid all the excitement—and no one who has not held an oar in such a scene can tell how exciting it is—one's sympathies lie with the poor hunted creature. The whale has a small eye, little larger than that of a bullock; but I cannot easily forget the mute expostulation which I read in one as it is dimmed over in death within hand's touch of me. What could it guess, poor creature, of the laws of supply and demand; or how could it imagine that when nature placed an elastic filter inside of its mouth, and when man discovered that the plates of which it was composed were the most pliable and yet durable things in creation, its death warrant was signed?"

TO THE FAR SOUTH.

Conan Doyle is not a man who goes to extremes, but it seems that he did in the matter of his voyaging. He came home from the Arctic circle, took his degree at Edinburgh, and at once shipped for the west coast of Africa.

Here is a tragedy of the sea which occurred when Doyle was a boy. He read an account of it at the time, and it made a powerful impression on his young mind. An American ship called the Marie Celeste was found abandoned off the west coast. Nothing on her was disturbed and there were no signs of a struggle. Her cargo was untouched, and there was no evidence that she had come through a storm. On the cabin table was screwed a sewing machine, and on the arm of the sewing machine was a spool of silk thread, which would have fallen off if there had been any motion of the vessel. She was loaded with clocks, and her papers showed that she had left Baltimore for Lisbon. She was taken to Gibralter, but to this day no one knows what became of the captain and crew of the Marie Celeste.

This mystery of the sea set the future Sherlock Holmes at work trying to find a solution for it. There was no clue to go on, except an old Spanish sword, found in the forecastle, which showed signs of having been recently cleaned. Doyle's solution of the problem appeared in the form of a story for the Cornhill Magazine, entitled, "J. Habbakuk Jephson's Statement." Jephson was supposed to be an American doctor who had taken passage on the ship for his health. Shortly after the story appeared the following telegram was printed in the London papers:

"Solly Flood, her majesty's advocate-general at Gibraltar, telegraphs that the statement of J. Habbakuk Jephson is nothing less than a fabrication."

So it was; but the telegram was a compliment to the realism of the story, to say the least.

HIS METHODS OF WORK.

Dr. Conan Doyle is a methodical worker, and a hard worker. He pastes up over his mantel shelf a list of the things he intends to do in the coming six months, and he sticks to his task until it is done. He must be a great disappointment to his old teacher. When he had finished school, the teacher called the boy up before him and said solemnly:

"Doyle, I have known you now for seven years, and I know you thoroughly. I am going to say something to you that you will remember in after life. Doyle, you will never come to any good!"

The making of an historical novel involves much hard reading. The result of this hard reading Doyle sets down in a note book. Sometimes all he gets out of several volumes is represented by a couple of pages in this book. For sometime past he has been greatly interested in the Napoleonic revival, and has recently written some marvelously good short stories set in the stormy period of the first empire. When asked by a friend for his opinion of the great Corsican, Dr. Doyle replied:

"He was a wonderful man—perhaps the most wonderful man who ever lived. What strikes me is the lack of finality in his character. When you make up your mind that he is a complete villain, you come on some noble trait, and then your admiration of this is lost in some act of incredible meanness. But just think of it! Here was a young fellow of 30, a man who had no social advantages and but slight educational training, a member of a poverty-stricken family, entering a room with a troop of kings at his heels, and all the rest of them jealous if he spoke a moment longer to one than to the others. Then there must have been a great personal charm about the man, for some of those intimate with him loved him."

LITERARY TASTES AND OPINIONS.

Conan Doyle takes a very optimistic view of the future of romantic literature. He says: "I think there never was a time when there was a better promise. There are at least a dozen men and women who have made a deep mark, and who are still young. No one can say how far they may go. Some of them are sure to develop, for the past shows us that fiction is an art which improves up to the age of fifty or so. With fuller knowledge of life comes greater power in describing it. For example, there are more than a dozen—Barrier, Kipling, Oliver Schreiner, Sarah Grand, Miss Harraden, Gilbert Parker, Quiller-Couch, Hall Caine, Stevenson, Stanley Weyman, Anthony Hope, Crockett, Rider Haggard, Jerome, Zingwill, Clark Russell, George Moore, many of them under thirty and few of them much over it. Then if a man keeps out of grooves and refuses to do his work in a mechanical way he steadily advances. Why, many of the greatest writers in our fiction did not begin until after forty. Thackeray was about

BUST OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

forty. Scott was past forty. Charles Reade and George Eliot were as much. Richardson was fifty. To draw life one must know it. My experience is that when a man is fifty he knows he will improve until he is sixty, and when he is sixty he feels that improvement will keep right on until he is seventy; whereas, when he is twenty he thinks that perhaps he will know more when he is thirty, but is not sure. Man is an amusing animal.

"Then although I did not read as much American fiction as I should like, what I have read has, I hope, been fairly representative. I know Cable's work, and Eugene Field's, and Hamlin Garland's and Edgar Fawcett's, and Richard Harding Davis's. I think Harold Frederic's 'In the Valley' is one of the best of recent historical romances. The danger for American fiction is, I think, that it should run in many brooks instead of one broad stream. There is a tendency to overaccentuate all peculiarities; differences, after all, are very superficial things, and good old human nature is always there under a coat of varnish. When one hears of a literature of the West or of the South it sounds aggressively sectional. Barrie and Hardymight, I know, have the same charge brought against them, unless one reads close enough to appreciate that they have gained success by showing how the Scotch or Wessex peasant shares our common human nature, not by accentuating the points in which they differ from us."

THE OBJECT OF FICTION.

The author of Sherlock Holmes expressed himself strongly concerning William Dean Howells's strictures upon art in romance writing. He said: "We talk so much about art that we tend to forget what this art was ever invented for. It was to amuse mankind—to help the sick and the dull and the weary. If Scott and Dickens have done this for millions, they have done well by their art. Where would Gulliver and Don Quixote and Dante and Goethe be if our sole object was to draw life exactly as it exists. No; the object of fiction is to interest, and the best fiction is that which interests most. If you can interest by drawing life as it is, do so. But there is no reason why you should object to your neighbor using other means.

"I think the age of fiction is coming—the age when religious and social and political changes will all be affected by means of the novelist. Look, within recent years, how much has been done by such books as 'Looking Backward' or 'Robert Elsmore.' Everybody is educated now, but comparatively few are very educated. To get an idea to penetrate to the masses of the people you must put fiction round it, like sugar round a pill. No statesman and and no ecclesiastic will have the influence on public opinion which the novelist of the future will have. If he has strong convictions, he will have wonderful facilities for impressing them on others. If he can't get his sugar right, people will refuse his pill."

THE ORIGINAL SHERLOCK HOLMES.

STRAWBERRY CULTURE.

Strawberries will flourish and give profitable crops on almost any kind of soil, if enriched by the application of a good lot of well rotted barnyard manure, and plenty of water given at the fruiting season.

It is a mistake to suppose that strawberries require no more water after the fruit has all been picked; in fact, they require a good irrigation once a week afterwards, until the rainy season sets in. The plants must be kept growing vigorously to develop new crowns for the coming season; it is these new crowns whence spring all the next season's staiks. It will thus be observed that the better care we take of our strawberry patches this season, the larger will be the crop next season.

The land for strawberries should be plowed and harrowed well after the fertilizers have been added.

The rows for the plants can be about four feet apart, or any ordinary width to suit the convenience of the grower. The plants can be set from twelve to eighteen inches apart, according to the variety. Such plants as the Sharpless, Australian Crimson, Lady, Bomba, and Gandy, should be about eighteen inches apart, because they are rapid growers and are very large plants; but varieties such as the Sanders, Crescent, Triomphe De Gand, Hood River, Mitchell's Early, etc., should be planted about twelve inches apart. If Alpine strawberries are to be planted, they should be set about four inches apart.

If a great amount of fruit is wanted, the plants should be grown in the matted row system—that is, allow the runners to take hold until the row is a solid mass of plants about one foot wide. Of course a great amount of fruit is produced by this method, but it is liable to be smaller than when grown in the hill system—this latter system is best when large berries are wanted; the plants are set about eighteen inches apart and all runners kept severely pruned off, thus throwing all the energy and vitality into the berry.

If large berries are wanted for exhibition purposes, such varieties as the Sharpless, Mrs. Cleveland, Gillespie and Edgar Queen should be grown in hill culture, and well fertilized.

It is not the largest that are the best all-purpose berries. The Gillespie strawberry has been known to yield berries over three and one-half inches in diameter (not circumference), still, with us it is a splendid berry for home use; for profit, however, we would select other varieties; again, the Gillespie seems to succeed well only in certain localities. Some growers speak of it as being very productive, while others speak very discouragingly of its productiveness. With me, however, it is as productive as a strawberry of that type should be. Were I planting a home garden I would certainly invest in about a dozen plants of this variety on account of their large size.

The great market berries of the Pacific coast are as follows: Australian Crimson, Hood River, Lallar, Triomphe De Gand, Buhach No. 5, Monarch of the West, and a few other less conspicuous varieties.

The Australian Crimson is an enormously productive variety (everbearing in Southern California), a brilliant, glossy crimson in color, and deliciously flavored; the fruit is large, firm, and a most wonderful shipper; the plant is a powerful, vigorous grower and is inclined to stool out.

The Hood River strawberry is one of the very best early varieties. An Oregon nurseryman best describes it as follows: "The Hood River strawberry took a medal at the World's Columbian Exposition; they are bi-sexual, large, firm fleshed, prolific and uniform in size; they can be shipped when they are white, and will bear shipping to New York and will come out a beautiful scarlet crimson, looking as though made of wax and dotted with golden seeds; the flavor is superb; they are earlier than Mitchell's Early."

The Lallar strawberry is a variety of the greatest excellence; it is a tall, vigorous grower, with foliage tall enough to protect the blossoms from spring frosts and rains. The berries are globe-shaped, a rich glowing crimson in color, and of a highly delicious flavor; it is a splendid shipper and brings rom 15 to 20 cents more per crate than the average varieties on account of its beautiful appearance; it is a large berry and always gives a good second crop in the fall.

The Triomphe De Gand is specially adapted to low wet soil, where it will give marvelous results in fruit; it is a glossy crimson in color; aromatic, sweet and delicious in flavor, and fruit of large size; it yields fruit most all season long, and is a remarkable berry for long distance shipment—being shipped by the carload from Sacramento to New York and other eastern cities.

The Monarch of the West is an enormously productive variety, somewhat light colored, but very rich, sweet and delicious in flavor; it is a splendid variety for home use and also for market.

Buhach No. 5, is a wonder in all respects and a most beautiful grower, with heavy, dark green foliage; it is very productive and the berries are of the largest size; it is a rich, brilliant scarlet color, of fine flavor, and the fruit in fruiting season lays in piles around the plant. The Buhach is a pistillate sort and should be fertilized by the Australian Crimson, Sharpless, or some other good variety.—S. L. Watkins in Rural Californian.

THE MENACE IN AFRICA.

[From Blackwood's Magazine.]

That the forces of Islam involved in the widespreading ramifications of the Senoussi sect menace the existence of French authority in north Africa it would be exaggeration to allege; that they even threaten its security to a serious extent may not perhaps be the case; but that they oppose a barrier to a French annexation of the great tracts intervening between Senegal and Algeria there can be no question.

A false move on the part of the Paris government, of the executive in Algiers or Tunis, or even of some subordinate official on the southern confines of the French possessions, might of a sudden arouse the fanaticism of the dwellers beyond the outposts, and the news of it would spread like wildfire over the Sahara and the Soudan. Then Mohammed el Mahdi might think his time was come, might proclaim religious war, and might bring into play the vast resources at his command by the strange organization that bears his name. Senoussi has shown no taste for strife. The Mahdi is not to be a man of war.

But it is the unexpected which always happens in these lands, and the sheikh may find some day circumstances too strong for him. That these people when they muster under the banner of Islam for fight are formidable the insurrection in the Soudan has served to show.

WHEAT AS A FOOD FOR STOCK.

One of the very unusual things in these remarkable times is the higher market price for corn than for wheat. The low price of wheat and the high price of corn have compelled farmers to study questions relating to the disposal of these crops and to the feeding of farm animals more carefully than they have ever done before.

The Department of Agriculture has published a circular of useful and timely information on wheat as food for stock, which should be in the hands of every grain grower in the land. It can be obtained on application to the secretary of agriculture, Washington, D. C. In conclusion the circular says:

"When wheat and corn are the same price per bushel, it is preferable to feed wheat and sell corn. First, becausee wheat weighs seven per cent. per bushel heavier than corn; second, because wheat is, weight for weight, an equally good grain for fattening animals and better for growing animals; and third, because there is much less value in fertilizing elements removed from the farm in corn than in wheat.

"There are certain points to be borne in mind when one is commencing to feed wheat. Our domesticated animals are all very fond of it, but are not accustomed to eating it. Precautions should consequently be observed to prevent accidents and disease from its use. It is a mater of common observation that when full-fed horses are changed from old to new oats, they are liable to attacks of indigestion, colic and founder. If such results follow the change from old to new oats, how much more likely are they to follow a radical change, such as from oats to wheat? For this reason, wheat should at first be fed in small quantities. It should ,when possible, be mixed with some other grain, and care should be taken to prevent any one animal from getting more than the quantity intended for it. These precautions are especially necessary when wheat is fed to horses, as these animals are peculiarly liable to colic and other disturbances of the digestive organs, accompanied or followed by laminitis. Cattle, sheep and hogs frequently crowd each other from the troughs, in which case some individuals obtain more than their share, and may bring on serious or fatal attacks of indigestion.

"The best form in which to feed wheat is to roll or grind it into a coarse meal. It may then be fed alone, or mixed with corn meal or ground oats. When ground fine it is pasty, and adheres to the teeth, gums and cheeks, so that it is not so readily masticated or eaten. In the form of coarse meal it is relished by all animals, it is in a condition to be attacked by the digestive processes whether thoroughly masticated or not, and in most cases gives the best results. Dr. Gilbert appears to have better results from whole than from ground wheat when fed to sheep. Sheep feeders may therefore experiment with whole wheat, but wheat meal will certainly be found to give better results with all other kinds of animals.

"The number of pounds of live weigh that may be produced by feeding a bushel of wheat will evidently vary according to the age and condition of the animal fed. Professor Robertson, at the Ottawa experiment station, fed frozen wheat to hogs, and secured from 9.1 to 15.46 pounds, live weight, from a bushel, the greater increase being from young, growing animals, and the smaller from those which were fattening. At the South Dakota experiment station, the hogs fed ground wheat required 4.81 pounds, and those fed whole wheat required 4.91 pounds for one pound gain in live weight."

For many months past the feeding of wheat to farm stock has been advocated by such excellent authorities as Professor W. A. Henry. It is already in successful practice in many parts of the country, and the practice is daily extending. Its first and desirable effects will be to restore the equilibrium of price between wheat and corn, and cut down the surplus of wheat that bears down the market price below profitable production.

YES.

You understand correctly. The Rio Grande Western and Colorado Midland only charge $16.50 from all points in Utah to the famous Glenwood Springs and return. Tickets good thirty days.

ERRORS ABOUT EVOLUTION.

[From the Westminster Review.]

The popular belief concerning evolution is that a person named Darwin wrote a book with the object of proving that men were the descendants of monkeys. Mr. John B. Martin, of Martin's bank, London, relates an anecdote concerning a customer of the bank, who insisted upon removing his account because he had observed that one of the partners in the bank had attended Darwin's funeral. Most assuredly this person must have supposed that Darwin had injured the human race by the shocking discovery that men and monkeys were such near relatives!

Today everybody talks about evolution as if it were something which had been suddenly and recently discovered. Like electricity, the bacilli of consumption and typhoid fever, woman's rights, or the tariff question, it appears to have attracted the attention of the whole world, from Mr. Gladstone to "Professor" Garner, the latter gentleman having, according to a newspaper report, kindly condescended to explain that he did not agree with Darwin that man's predecessors were monkeys.

Everybody believes that he knows all about evolution, and many people discuss it in much the same way as they do the merits of books which they have not read or the fighting capacity of Corbett and Jackson. Everybody is aware, in a sort of unconscious way, that the whole theory was invented by the late Mr. Darwin, and systematized by Mr. Spencer, the prevalent impression being that we descended from men with tails, who were the final offspring—a sort of edition de luxe—of the gorilla or the chimpanzee.

Practically every part of this programme is a delusion. Mr. Darwin no more invented evolution than Mr. Edison invented electricity. We are no more descended from men with tails than we are descended from the Man cat, which has no tail, and our relationship to the gorilla is not nearer than a fiftieth cousinship, and is far more remote than that existing between the cat and the tiger. Scientists are not making daily efforts to discover the "missing link" because such links as are missing are not of paramount importance.

She—I don't see you with Miss Gotrox any more. Have you and she had a misunderstanding? He—No; an understanding. She rejected me.—Brooklyn Life.

Bacon—What's that thread tied about your little finger for? Egbert—Oh, that's just to remind my wife to ask me if I forgot something she told me to remember.—Tit-Bits.